NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Irish religious offer more to abuse victims; gov't says not enough

Michael Kelly Catholic News Service | Apr. 17, 2010

DUBLIN, Ireland -- Irish religious congregations have offered an additional 348 million euros ($470 million) to compensate victims of abuse in church-run industrial schools over a 40-year period.

However, a government spokesman said that amount, combined with the 128 million euros already paid, still was not enough.

The offer from the religious came almost 12 months after a report from the Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse revealed that, in some government institutions run by religious orders, abuse of children had been endemic. The commission heard from more than 10,000 former residents of the homes who alleged abuse.

When the abuse first came to light in 2002 the religious congregations paid compensation totaling 128 million euros in a deal in which they shared compensation payouts equally with the government. In turn the government agreed to indemnify the congregations from compensation claims.

However, since the publication of the report in May 2009 it has emerged that compensation payouts from a redress board have increased dramatically, and the bill currently stands at more than 1.3 billion euros.

Last May, under public pressure and following a motion passed by both chambers of the Irish parliament, the congregations agreed to reconsider their contribution.

Following a meeting with Prime Minister Brian Cowen in mid-April the 18 congregations involved revealed that they were willing to contribute the additional 348 million euros.

However, a government spokesman told Catholic News Service that the Irish government was seeking a further 200 million euros from the congregations, since the "final cost of the response to residential institutional abuse is estimated to reach 1.36 billion euros," and the religious were supposed to pay half.

Speaking after they emerged from the talks, Christian Brother Kevin Mullan said the meeting had been "useful, productive." He said the prime minister was "going to engage individually" with the congregations.

Mercy Sister Coirle McCarthy said the talks "went very well from my point of view. We had a constructive meeting."

Source URL (retrieved on *04/16/2014 - 14:34*): http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/irish-religious-offer-more-abuse-victims-govt-says-not-enough